

Service Decision March 10, 2009

The Service has determined that the SWG's recommended action will be protective of delta smelt. The action would be for the Projects to implement a 14-day average OMR flow of -5,000 cfs with a 5-day average OMR below -6,250 cfs. If smelt are caught at the facilities on two consecutive days, the Projects will reduce exports to operate to a -4,000 cfs within 3 days. If 20 or more delta smelt (expanded salvage) are salvaged at the facilities, the working group will meet to determine what OMR flow to recommend to the Service.

These flows are needed to protect delta smelt for the following reasons:

- 1) Delta water temperatures are currently at 12.7 degrees C (three station average of Mossdale, Rio Vista and Antioch) which is within the range of delta smelt spawning, which is 12-18 degrees C. Spawning is likely occurring throughout the delta and there are likely larval delta smelt as well as adult delta smelt in the system. To date, no larval delta smelt have been caught at the salvage facilities, but this is probably due to the difficulty in catching small sized larval delta smelt. As these fish get larger, sampling efforts will become more effective at sampling larval delta smelt and will help give a more detailed picture of the current delta smelt distribution in the delta.
- 2) The goal remains to prevent delta smelt from becoming entrained into the south delta where they can become entrained at the facilities or succumb to high water temperatures later in the season. Even though only 8 delta smelt were salvaged (expanded salvage) at the export facilities over the past week, there may be delta smelt in the central delta which could become entrained if actions to minimize OMR flows are not taken.